



# **Montessori Day School**

## **Student and Parent Handbook**

### ***School Hours***

**Preschool 8:30-11:45**

**Extended Day Kindergarten 8:30-2:00**

**Elementary: 8:30-2:30**

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## **MONTESSORI DAY SCHOOL**

Each year we make every effort to look at our school as a total environment for children from age three through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. We strive to develop a curriculum and enrichment program that meets each of our student's individual needs. It is our hope that once a child has started learning through the Montessori philosophy, he or she will be inspired to continue. Our parent education, social gatherings and fundraisers address the total school and the total child.

Our growth has been steady and we strive to have "Good Montessori" for all the children. We look forward to a year of growth for the children, the parents and the staff. In **June of 2008**, we celebrated the **30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Montessori Day School!**

### **Application Process**

Montessori Day School has a rolling admissions policy. Re-enrollment is first offered to current students. Then enrollment is extended to include siblings and other new students.

Classroom observations are the first step towards enrolling a student at Montessori Day School. These appointments are for adults only and prospective students should not attend. Please contact the office to set up an appointment.

A completed application and accompanying fee must also be submitted.

Intake interviews for those who have returned applications are held beginning in January. At the interview, the teachers will assess the student's school readiness and placement. If the student is ready, a contract will be issued.

Siblings should request an application by December 1 for the following year. A classroom observation is recommended for sibling applicants but is not required.

## **Attendance, Absences, Arriving Late, and Leaving Early**

Regular school attendance is important for any child's development, and we miss your child when she or he is absent!

Please tell your child's teacher when he or she cannot be at school due to an appointment and at what time he or she will arrive back in the classroom. Communicating with your child's teachers about your child's attendance allows them to plan accordingly. Plan to confirm your child's attendance schedule no later than the week prior to an appointment.

If you need to pick up your child early for appointments, etc. please send a reminder note to your child's teacher in the morning. Parents should then come into the classroom to pick up their child.

Contact the MDS office at 929-3339 or [kidslovemds@yahoo.com](mailto:kidslovemds@yahoo.com) by 9:00am on the day of an unscheduled absence. See the "Illness" section for more information.

## **Camp Thunderbird: Elementary Class Camp Experience**

All elementary students are invited to attend Camp Thunderbird, a YMCA camp on the North Carolina / South Carolina border. This annual three-day trip takes place in May and focuses on environmental education. The dates and times for this overnight trip are listed on the school calendar.

## **Carpools**

A school directory is delivered in late September. We urge parents to make arrangements among themselves to form carpools. If there are any changes in carpool arrangements, please inform everyone involved, and by all means discuss these changes with your child. You must send a note to the school with your child if he/she is riding home anyone other than his/her parent.

## **Classroom Observations**

We appreciate the support and advertising parents give our school. Please encourage your friends and relatives to observe both at the preschool and elementary levels. Appointments for observing in the preschool can be made beginning October 1<sup>st</sup> and are scheduled for Monday through Wednesday from 9:00 am - 10:00 am. Parents, relatives and friends are welcome to observe in the elementary classroom at any time. Please let the teacher know in advance that you will be coming.

## **Clothing**

Children need comfortable, washable and seasonally appropriate clothing for school. You may want to pick out clothes with your child before he/she goes to bed to avoid morning confusion. Check clothes to make sure children can get into and out of them themselves. Some overalls and coat jacket zippers make it impossible for a child to care for his own needs. Low coat hooks at home will give a child a chance to practice caring for his/her clothes.

The school will not be responsible for unlabeled clothes. Before children leave the school grounds, it is a good idea to ask them if they have the coat, sweater or mittens they had in the morning. If a child has left something, he/she should return to class to fetch his/her belongings. It is important for each child to develop a sense of responsibility for his/her possessions. Unclaimed clothing will be given to the PTA Thrift Shop the day after school ends for the year.

All students will go outdoors every day, weather permitting. Mittens, boots and hats may be needed. Elementary children need to wear boots when it snows. If you do not feel your preschool child is well enough to go outside during the day, please plan to pick your child up at 11:00.

## **End Of Day Pick-Up**

If you need to pick up your child early for appointments, etc. please send a note to your child's teacher in the morning. Parents should then come into the classroom to pick up their child.

Preschool children are dismissed from the playground **PROMPTLY** at **11:45 a.m.** If there is bad weather, dismissal is from the classroom. Please do your best to be on time. Teachers need the time after dismissal to prepare the classroom for the next day, eat lunch and prepare for extended day.

Parents should park and walk to the playground or classroom to meet their children. Preschool student work for the week will be sent home on Fridays. This routine helps your child feel a sense of closure for the week. If you have questions, please talk to the teachers who are with the children. The other teachers are busy using their time to clean and set up for the next day, prepare for extended day, eat lunch and take care of administrative duties.

If children are **not enrolled** in the elementary or extended day program **they may not eat lunch at school**, with the exception of special school sponsored events. If you wish your child to continue socializing with other children, please take them to a nearby park.

Extended day students are dismissed from the front of the school at **2:00 p.m.** Elementary children are dismissed from the front of the school at **2:30 p.m.** Parents are responsible for helping children cross the driveway. Please do not park or wait at the curb so we can avoid traffic congestion.

Teachers are not available to supervise students outside of school hours. It is required that you arrange for someone other than their teachers to care for your children if you will be unable to pick them up within 15 minutes after their dismissal.

MDS recognizes that in the event of an emergency, parents or other caregivers may be unable to be on time to pick up their children. **\*If there is an emergency, please call the school.**

Parents who are late to pick up their students will be given the courtesy of a first time late pick up reminder of MDS fees. Thereafter, a late fee of \$20 per child will be added to a family's account for each late pick-up of preschool students after 12:00pm, extended day students after 2:15pm, and elementary students after 2:45pm.

## **Field Trips**

Part of our philosophy is to encounter new experiences and explore new environments. Field trips are one way we do this. Suggestions for field trips are always welcome. Parents will be asked to sign one permission slip for all field trips for the year.

North Carolina car seat regulations require that all children younger than age 8 and weighing less than 80 pounds be properly secured in a child passenger restraint device.

If you would like to volunteer to drive for our field trips and have siblings who want to accompany you, please check with your child's teacher before signing up to drive. Sometimes we have limited spaces for our trips and some trips may not be appropriate for younger children.

## **Food Preparation: Preschool**

Food preparation is a work in the preschool class. It is an exercise in which the children practice grace and courtesy. We ask one child each week to bring in food for this work. Each child will provide food preparation about twice a year. This begins in October. The person responsible for food preparation will be indicated on the calendar. Some food suggestions are:

8 apples	1 bunch of celery	Soft cheese with crackers
10 bananas	7 cucumbers	hard cheese
8 pears	1 lb. bag baby carrots	hard-boiled eggs
bread	6 green peppers	1 box Ritz Crackers

## **Head Lice Policy**

The Montessori Day School follows guidelines set by DEHNR (State of North Carolina Department of Environment, Health, and Natural Resources) in the event that head lice are found. The state guidelines are the same ones followed by the Chapel Hill-Carrboro and Orange County school systems. This means we have a strict no-nit policy. If your child comes to school with nits or lice, you will be called to take your child home. You will need to treat your child and when there are no nits or lice, he/she may return to school the next day. If your child has been sent home twice with nits or lice, we must have a health care provider's note stating that your child is nit and lice free before he/she may return to school.

Please report all cases of head lice to the school. We realize this can be a difficult problem, but we must have a firm policy so that other children in our school do not become infected. If a student has head lice, a note will be sent home to all parents notifying them that a case has been found at school. We will include guidelines for properly treating head lice.

## **Health Forms**

All new students are to return a school health form by the first day of school. Returning students need only keep their immunization records current. Please notify us if your child develops any allergies or chronic difficulties (ear infections, headaches, etc.) during the school year. No child may attend school without an accurate health form on file. **All children must be toilet trained.**

## **Illness**

Regular school attendance is important for any child's development. However, if your child has a fever or stomach illness, please do not send him/her to school. To avoid unknowingly infecting other children, we ask that you keep your child home until he/she has had a normal temperature and no stomach issues for **a full 24 hours**.

If your child's teacher determines that your child is not healthy enough to be at school, we will contact you and ask that you come to pick up your child. It is therefore important that we have a phone number where we can reach you during school hours.

If your child will be absent due to illness, please contact the MDS office at 929-3339 or [kidslovemds@yahoo.com](mailto:kidslovemds@yahoo.com) by 9:00am.

## **Insurance**

The school has taken out a medical and dental accident insurance plan for the student that coincides with a child's existing coverage. If your child has a school related accident, please contact the school.

## **Medications**

If your child needs medication on a regular basis, you are responsible for filling out a form authorizing an agent of the school to administer such medications. You must provide information about the amount of medication to give and the times and means of dosage. Please let the school know of any allergies your child may have to particular medications.

## **Morning Drop-Off**

Teachers are not available to supervise students outside of school hours. The elementary classroom opens at 8:20am. The preschool and extended day kindergarten classrooms open at 8:30am.

It is required that you arrange for someone other than their teachers to care for your children if you will be unable to wait until their classroom is open to drop them off. This requirement makes it possible for the teachers to prepare their classrooms for all students.

In order to ease traffic congestion in our parking lot, we stagger morning drop off times. Elementary students may be dropped off between **8:20 and 8:30 a.m.** Preschool students may arrive between **8:30 and 8:40 a.m and must be walked to their classroom.** Carpools involving both elementary and preschoolers should plan to arrive at **8:30am.**

When dropping off children, please pull into a parking space so you do not block the flow of traffic. Please assist all students in crossing the parking lot. Please do not park in front of the walk that leads to Beth's classroom, or in front of the main school door. Additional spaces are available in the lot next to the preschool.

## **Newsletter**

A newsletter, produced by the Parent Support Group, will be sent home to each family around the first of each month. This newsletter will be sent home via email unless a hardcopy is specifically requested. This is a wonderful communication resource. Extra newsletters will be available in the office.

## **Parent Meetings**

Parent meetings will be offered regularly. These meetings are an opportunity to better understand Montessori philosophy, to discuss effective parenting and to become acquainted with other parents. Some meetings will be held for parents in the entire school, while others will be divided by age level. Refer to the school calendar for dates and topics. If you have suggestions for effective parent meeting topics, please contact the Parent Support Group.

## **Parent Support Group (PSG)**

Our parents have formed a group in association with the teachers for the purpose of:

- Providing support for the school
- Providing a way for parents to become acquainted and work together
- Facilitating school communication via the newsletter, etc.
- Providing parent education and support
- Raising funds that can be used to supplement the children's entire curriculum and/or aid in supporting the needs of the school.

Last year the Parent Support Group helped provide valuable resources, including a year-long music program for all students, art supplies, classroom enrichment materials, and playground equipment. More information about the PSG will be available at our first parent meeting.

## **Parking Lot Safety**

Thank you to everyone for driving with extra caution during each and every drop off and pick up. Going slower than usual is imperative for drivers at MDS whether pulling into a space or pulling out of a space. Whether driving or walking, pay close attention to where your children are and where other families are as you travel anywhere in our lot or the adjoining spaces we use for overflow parking.

Families who park their cars closest to Melanie and Jean's classroom gate are asked to allow ample space between that gate and your vehicle, especially in the absence of a walkway leading to that entrance.

## **Pets**

Pets are not permitted on school property during school hours unless it's for a special occasion (i.e.) Pet Day. Dogs must be leashed at all times, even after school hours.

## **Physical Education**

In addition to daily playground activities, we have a special P.E. program. The P.E. instructor helps the children participate in age appropriate gross motor activities with a focus on non-competitive sports games that promote cooperative play. First year children (3 year olds) do not participate in P.E. Children should wear running shoes and dress appropriately when they are scheduled for P.E.

## **Preschool Share Day**

On Fridays, the preschoolers have a share day. Children are invited to bring small items related to the topic of discussion for the month to describe to the other children. The newsletter will keep you informed as to our current topics. Children are encouraged to bring labeled books, records or tapes to share with the class anytime, though we will not always be able to go through all the material the children bring in. Please explain this to your child in advance.

## **Preschool Snack**

We ask each parent and his/her child to provide a nutritious snack about once each month. Snacks need not be elaborate or costly. Please use your imagination, and just keep in mind snacks should be nutritious, manageable and appropriate in quantity. The monthly calendar will indicate your child's snack day. Your child's birthday will be his/her assigned snack day. We suggest a sweet snack only for your child's birthday. Napkins and glasses will be provided by the school. The following are a few suggestions:

### **Snack Suggestions (For 20 Children)**

Raisins, pretzels, animal crackers, cheese, assorted crackers, popcorn, breads, fruits, raw vegetables and dip, breadsticks, pizza pieces, small bagels and cream cheese, and small yogurts.

We provide water with snack.

## **Re-Enrollment**

In January, all currently enrolled students will be sent a contract for the next school year. The contract will be due back in February. All required fees and deposit dates are listed on the contract. All returning students must indicate their intention to return with a tuition deposit and a signed contract, by the specified due date. After that date, enrollment will be open to siblings who are toilet-trained and who will be 3 years old on, before, or soon after August 31<sup>st</sup>, and then to new students.

### **SPACES CANNOT BE HELD FOR RETURNING STUDENTS ONCE THE CONTRACT DATE HAS PASSED.**

If you decide not to re-enroll your child for the following school year, please consider waiting to discuss this decision with your child until the late spring. We have observed that once a child who is in the MDS elementary class knows he or she is not returning the next year, schoolwork can suffer.

## **School Closings**

School closings due to inclement weather are announced on [www.wral.com](http://www.wral.com), WRAL-TV, and on the radio at 1360 WCHL. We also post school closings on our website at [www.mdsch.org](http://www.mdsch.org). We will not make up days missed due to weather. If we have a **delayed opening, school will begin at 10:00 a.m.** for all students.

## **School T-Shirts**

All students receive a school T-shirt. An order form will be sent home at the beginning of the school year. Please fill out the attached size request form and return to the school. Examples of t-shirt sizes are available in the office. Adults may order their own T-shirt for a small price. Children are encouraged to wear their t-shirts often, especially on field trip days.

## **Student Birthdays**

Children are welcome, if they choose, to bring a special snack to share on their birthdays. Please let the teacher know in advance if this is something you and your child would like to do.

## **Substitutes**

Parents interested in substituting should contact the teachers.

## **Testing**

In accordance with Montessori philosophy, we do not assign grades, and the only time we administer a standardized test is at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, as required by the state of North Carolina. However, from time to time, teachers will ask parents to have a child academically or psychologically tested. This is usually done as an information seeking experience, to develop the most appropriate teaching strategy for a child.

## **Tuition Payments**

Tuition payments are due on the first of the month, according to the payment schedule that you selected on your contract. Please make an effort to pay on time. Your contract also lists your payment amount. A late fee of **\$45** per student will be charged when tuition is paid on or after the 8th of the month, unless prior arrangement has been made and approved. If quarterly payments are late a second time, the account will be changed to a monthly payment schedule. Please pay your tuition by the 7th of the month.